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LETTER DATED 20 MAY 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation dated 20 May 1999 concerning the latest air strike by North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) aircraft against civilian targets in Belgrade (see annex). I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) S. LAVROV

99-15132 (E) 210599 210599

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Annex

Statement issued on 20 May 1999 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

Last night, during the most intensive raids by NATO aviation against Belgrade over the recent period, the neurosurgery department of the "Dragisa Misovic" hospital was destroyed by a direct hit from two missiles, and the paediatric and gynaecological departments were severely damaged. As a result of the bombings, three patients died, and two women and several medical staff were injured. The residence of the Swedish ambassador to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was also damaged by NATO aircraft.

The Russian Federation once again firmly condemns the criminal actions by the aircraft of the alliance. The terrible consequences of bomb strikes for the civilian population of Yugoslavia have now become a daily reality. The raid on the hospital in Belgrade is a heinous violation of the Geneva Conventions on the Protection of War Victims.

In protesting against these actions, we once again call on the NATO leadership and member countries of the alliance to reconsider and to proceed seriously to political negotiations with the objective of settling the Kosovo problem. We are convinced that there is no other course, and the NATO strategists should be clearly aware of that.